

# DAILY URBAN HEN CARE

## Being responsible for your egg-laying hens

1. Buy chicken feed from a specialized supplier. Pet stores typically do not sell chicken feed.
2. To keep your hens comfortable, provide shade on hot days, and safe reliable heat and wind protection on cold days. Provide good ventilation all-year-round. Adjust these according to the weather and season.
3. Provide free access to fresh, clean water everyday. Otherwise, your hens may develop illnesses and infections.
4. All animals, including hens, can be disease carriers that can infect humans who are in close contact with them, including children, older family members, and those with vulnerable immune systems. Learn how to handle your hens without accidentally exposing yourself, your family, and other hens.
5. Eggs are porous and can absorb harmful bacteria. Wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before and after handling eggs and hens.
6. Secure your hens and hen feed at night to keep them safe from rats, mice, raccoons, skunks, neighbourhood pets, urban coyotes, and other similar animals.
7. Any area where animals live will become more contaminated the longer animals are housed there. Plan some “down time” when no poultry live in the yard. This gives you a chance to decontaminate the entire area and break the life cycle of the bacteria and viruses.
8. A hen can live for several years. An older hen periodically needs to take a break from laying eggs – a process called “molting”. Molting is natural and is necessary for older hens to remain healthy.
9. Composting chicken manure with your typical household compost is not recommended. Hen manure is higher in certain minerals (especially phosphorous) which can interfere with the composting process. Develop a plan to dispose of chicken manure properly.
10. Despite your best efforts, a hen may die without an obvious reason. *Immediately contact your veterinarian.*

*With growing interest in raising egg-laying hens in urban settings, you may want to consider the many challenges and responsibilities that come with caring for hens in the city.*

*Your hens will rely on you entirely for their daily nutrition, health, safety, and environmental needs.*

*Practicing responsible hen care and food safety methods will help you and your family to enjoy the eggs your hens provide.*

### GOOD TO KNOW

- Each week, a hen eats about 1 kg of feed and drinks about 2 L of water.
- A hen excretes about 1 kg of manure each week.
- Feeding household and garden waste to your hens may not provide the energy, calcium, and protein they need for good growth and health.
- Feed for egg-laying hens is very high in calcium and protein. The calcium level that a hen needs would be toxic to other animals such as your pet cat and dog.
- All animal owners (commercial and non-commercial), veterinarians, and laboratories are required by law to report immediately an animal infected with (or suspected to be infected with) a provincially or federally reportable disease.